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SUBJECT: PM SORO CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION OF
ATTEMPT ON HIS LIFE

¶1. Several Ambassadors accompanied acting SRSG Abou Moussa to Bouake to visit Prime Minister Soro on July 3. The meeting, which lasted about 45 minutes, devoted more time to formal expressions of sympathy and Soro's detailed account of what happened than to substantive political discussions.

¶2. PM Soro related that President Gbagbo has called him every day since the incident to express his sympathy. The PM stated that both he and President Gbagbo remained determined to move the political process forward toward elections.

¶3. Turning to the incident itself, PM Soro cleared his Forces Nouvelles troops of responsibility for the incident; he specifically mentioned Zone Commanders Ousmane Sherif and Zacharie Kone, who have been cited in the press as suspects. Soro said that some arrests have been made, but not of those who carried out the attack. He did not identify those arrested. The PM said the assailants had been trained and brought in from the outside, and he knew who financed and commanded them. He did not elaborate on the last point, but to the assembled ambassadors, this appeared to be a reference to Ibrahim Coulibaly, one of the brains behind the 2002 coup attempt who had a falling out with Soro and has subsequently lived in exile outside of Cote d'Ivoire.

¶4. PM Soro informed acting SRSG that he would be writing to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to request that an international investigation be carried out of the incident. Soro stated that this would be the only way to ensure that the investigation was impartial. Abou Moussa promised to alert the Secretary General that the letter would be forthcoming.

HOOKS